

EXTRA 102/98

Fear for Safety of Palestinians 18 December 1998

ISRAEL/OCCUPIED TERRITORIES	Muhammad Ahmad Da'ud, aged 19]
	Kamal Abu 'Adwan, aged 21]
	Muhammad Sulayman 'Amer, aged 18] killed
	Jihad Ayyad, aged 16]
	Naser Erekat, aged 20, student]

At least 200 others injured, some seriously

Muhammad Ahmad Da'ud yesterday became the fifth Palestinian to be killed by Israeli security forces in the last 10 days during protest demonstrations in the West bank. Amnesty International is concerned that more Palestinians may be killed in expected demonstrations protesting at the US bombing of Iraq over the coming days.

Muhammad Ahmad Da'ud was apparently shot by a member of the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) in al-Bireh during a protest against the US bombing of Iraq during which 10 others were injured. Although demonstrators were reportedly throwing stones at the Israeli security forces there is no evidence that the lives of the IDF were in danger.

On 11 December 1998 Kamal Abu 'Adwan and Muhammad Sulayman 'Amer were shot dead by the IDF during a demonstration in Qalqiliya demanding the release of Palestinian political prisoners. On 9 December Jihad Ayyad was shot and killed by Israeli security forces during a protest demonstration in al-Bireh. The same day, Naser Erekat died in hospital of gunshot wounds sustained two days earlier. He had been shot in the head as he was reportedly bringing his younger brother down from the roof of the family house.

Several Israeli soldiers and civilians have been injured by stones.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Although the protests against the Israeli forces tend to be violent, with demonstrators almost invariably reported to be throwing stones, the killings appear to have occurred even though the lives of the Israeli security forces were not in danger. Principle 9 of the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials states that:

Law enforcement officials shall not use firearms against persons except in self-defence or defence of others against the imminent threat of death or serious injury, to prevent the perpetration of a particularly serious crime involving grave threat to life, to arrest a person presenting such a danger and resisting their authority, or to prevent his or her escape, and only when less extreme means are insufficient to achieve these objectives. In any event, intentional lethal use of firearms may only be made when strictly unavoidable in order to protect life.

Open-fire guidelines of the Israeli security forces, however, allow them to fire rubber-coated metal bullets to disperse demonstrators even when there is no threat to life. They are supposedly used only after having fully utilised the other possibilities and to be fired at no closer than 40 metres - already a potentially lethal range. Frequently soldiers facing stone-throwing protests disobey these rules. In addition, live ammunition has also been reported to have caused the deaths of those shot in Qalqiliya.

Members of the Israeli security forces who cause the deaths of Palestinians have almost complete impunity; in a case on 9 December families of two people killed by the Israeli police during a demonstration outside the al-Aqsa Mosque in September 1996, in circumstances where the lives of the security forces were not in danger, were refused compensation by the Jerusalem District Court who said that the police were not at fault.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or in your own language:

- expressing concern at the killing of Palestinians during protest demonstrations;
- demanding that members of the Israeli security forces should only use firearms in circumstances authorized by Article 9 of the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials;
- calling on the Israeli Government to bring the forces' "Open Fire Regulations" into line with international standards;
- calling on the Israeli Government to ensure that anyone who has carried out an unlawful killing be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

Binyamin Netanyahu
 Prime Minister
 Office of the Prime Minister
 3 Kaplan Street
 Hakiryia, Jerusalem 91007, Israel
Telegrams: Prime Minister, Jerusalem, Israel
Faxes: + 972 3 691 7915
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

General Yitzhak Mordechai
 Minister of Defence
 Ministry of Defence
 7 'A' Street, Hakiryia, Tel Aviv, Israel
Telegrams: Defence Minister, Tel Aviv, Israel
Faxes: + 972 3 697 6218
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

diplomatic representatives of Israel accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 15 January 1999.